

INDUSTRIAL AREAS

This section describes the industrial areas of Fairmont Avenue and Mission Gorge Place. Industrial uses along and off of Mission Gorge Road, north of Old Cliffs Road will also be discussed with the sand and gravel extraction operations along the San Diego River.

Fairmont Avenue

The Fairmont Avenue industrial area extends from Mission Gorge Road to the south to Friars Road to the north. Lots on the eastern side of the street are generally smaller than the lots on the western side, which have some modern industrial and office developments.

Overall many industrial uses in the Fairmont Avenue industrial area do not have adequate sized parcel to accommodate their operations. This is usually related to inadequate lot size to accommodate the building and related use. Many car repair and sales businesses in the Project Area, particularly along Fairmont Avenue and nearby Mission Gorge Road, are on parcels so small that they do not have enough space to store cars waiting to be repaired or picked-up by owners. Because of this, shop owners park cars along the main street and on streets in the adjoining commercial areas. This adds to the already congested street conditions in the Project Area and often violates parking regulations.

Narrow streets contribute to the impacted situation, because when cars line the streets they are less safe for traffic and pedestrians. The streets are not wide enough for two-way traffic and parking on both sides of the street. The lack of off-street parking is evidenced by the signage in parking lots restricting parking and in some instances requiring a permit.

In several circumstances the buildings on the eastern side of Fairmont Avenue were single-family homes that have been adapted for business use with minor façade changes. Other parcels lack lot depth, requiring the use of sidewalks for parking and deliveries. These properties can only support small marginal businesses due to lack of parking. There is often no loading area, so that trucks must block parking spaces or park in the street for deliveries. Often times the sidewalk is used for parking and deliveries, which causes safety problems for pedestrians trying to share the same sidewalk space. The lack of parking and adequate pedestrian pathways is a sign of the general obsolescence of many of the industrial buildings.

Older residential structures converted to industrial and commercial use also suffer from hazardous materials contamination such as lead paint and asbestos. Commercial and industrial operations are high-impact uses that are likely to disturb these substances, more so than residential occupation for which the structure was originally intended. Residential units that were converted to industrial and commercial uses in a substandard manner are some of the oldest and most deteriorated in the Project Area. The visible lack of maintenance for

industrial and commercial properties suggests a likely probability of damaged lead based paint and asbestos for many properties in the Project Area.

Prior to 1980 many household and commercial use paints contained lead with the amount of lead in paint being higher the older the date of paint manufacture. Sixty-three (63) (62%) of the commercial parcels and 94 (79%) of the industrial properties were built prior to 1975 and given the limited improvements that have occurred in much of the Project Area, it is likely that these buildings still have lead-based paint present. Lead is a highly toxic metal that was used for many years in products found in and around homes. Lead may cause a range of health effects, from behavioral problems and learning disabilities to seizures and death. Research suggests that two primary sources of lead exposure likely to be found in the Project Area are:

- deteriorating lead-based paint; and
- lead contaminated dust

Lead is released when the paint is damaged and peeling. Children are the most affected by lead exposure. Because lead can affect children at low levels of exposure. 10 milligrams per deciliter is considered lead poisoning and has a detrimental affect on child. Children 6 years old and under are most at risk, because their bodies are growing quickly. The commercial zoning along Mission Gorge Road allows for mixed-use, multi-family development. If multi-family housing is developed, occupants will be adjacent to these toxic properties.

Asbestos is another hazardous material found in older buildings. Asbestos can be located in textured ceilings, linoleum, pipefittings and plaster. This material is inert unless it is disturbed by deterioration or other means. The deteriorated condition of older industrial and commercial properties points to the probability that asbestos has been disturbed, causing hazard conditions.

When viewing buildings along the Fairmont Avenue frontage from the street, many parcels show signs of deterioration, however, traveling the alleys of this area give a truer impression of the serious conditions. The eastern side of Fairmont Avenue contains several alleys that generally revealed more severe blighting conditions than views from the street frontage. Parcels have been overbuilt with substandard rear area additions to accommodate multiple-users, thereby creating increased parking demands where there is already an insufficient amount of spaces. Generally, these properties are not well maintained and therefore have a detrimental affect on the surrounding commercial district. These units have been built for income, have virtually no architectural features, little off-street parking, and inadequate access. Due to limited indoor areas, significant work takes place outside. The most common type of outdoor work is on cars with several shops have lifts outdoors for repairs.

To further accommodate outdoor repairs and production many businesses particularly on the west side of Fairmont Avenue (along the San Diego River)

are using steel storage containers, which are designed for mobile storage as extensions to the existing building to perform work. Many outdoor repair and manufacturing businesses omit dust and debris into the environment some of which is toxic and in many portions of the Project Area washes into storm drains, which outlet directly to the San Diego River (and later the Pacific Ocean at the river's outflow) or onto nearby properties. During the RSG survey, staff observed multiple sites where debris and other by-products from the site's operations were going into storm drains or contaminating neighboring sites.

Survey staff also saw outdoor grinding and welding, which leave metal shavings. In addition, changing oil, anti-freeze, and other vehicle fluids without the proper catching equipment also leaves hazardous residues behind. This creates an unhealthy environment for employees and patrons, and resulting toxic runoff will affect neighboring communities.

Below are examples of conditions along the Fairmont Avenue corridor.



Parcel Number – 458 522 04

This property is suffering from physical deterioration due to lack of maintenance and excessive use. The single-family has been converted to a distributions center for a courier service through a series of substandard and poorly maintained additions.



Parcel Number – 461 160 05

This auto repair shop on Fairmont Avenue is typical of many auto repair businesses in the Project Area that have limited building space and must resort to outdoor repairs. Also, as with most properties, runoff from site is draining directly into the street and left untreated to drain into the San Diego River.



Parcel Number – 458 522 06

This single-family residential structure also suffers from incompatible industrial uses, substandard and deteriorating additions as well as a lack of storage area for trash and debris.



Parcel Number – 458 510 14

Lack of off-street parking, caused vehicles to be double parked in the public right-of-way creating an unsafe access and egress to the properties for cars and pedestrians.



Parcel Number – 458 510 30

Lack of on-site parking, causing vehicles to park in the public right-of-way creating an unsafe traffic condition by restricting traffic view sight lines for vehicles and pedestrians.



Parcel Number – 458 300 03

Outdoor refueling area on dirt lot next to San Diego River. Outdoor welding and storage of heavy equipment takes place at this site with runoff from welding debris, rusting equipment and refueling operations draining directly into the San Diego River or leaching into the soil and groundwater.



Parcel Number – 458 521 25

Outdoor vehicle repair area with industrial runoff including motor oil, transmission fluid and battery acid. Left-over parts from repairs (batteries engines blocks) are a significant source of contamination in the Project Area.



Parcel Number – 458-510-03

Gas station for commercial vehicles, which drains runoff directly into the San Diego River and takes access off side streets and alleys, negatively affecting surrounding traffic circulation as large vehicles travel these smaller streets.



Parcel Number – 458 150 10

Storm drains serving most of the Fairmont industrial area capture runoff and send it directly (untreated) into the San Diego River.



Parcel Number – 461-220-12

Area is prone to flooding and suffer from stagnant water after a storm.



Parcel Number – 461 160 01

Excessive lot coverage and unsafe storage of flammable materials in crowded conditions.



Parcel Number – 458 521 11

Outdoor auto body repair using canvas canopies without proper air ventilation equipment for painting in a residential structure converted to industrial use.



Parcel Number – 461 220 12

Poorly constructed addition with use of flammable materials in a confined working area.



Parcel Number – 458 300 04

Container storage units with ventilation fans and unpermitted electrical service have been converted to substandard work areas.



Parcel Number – 461 160 05

Multiple curb cuts servicing narrow parcels reduce on street parking. Inadequate parking is also negatively impacted by older site design where buildings were not set back adequately from the street. The result is unsafe vehicle and pedestrian traffic conditions. Also, the visual appearance is compromised by the large number of utility poles servicing the overall Project Area.

Mission Gorge Place

On the north side of Mission Gorge Road along Interstate 8 is another industrial portion of the Project Area, which extends to Waring Road at its eastern edge. Most businesses are along Mission Gorge Place, which turns into Alvarado Canyon Road in a semi-circular route. Alvarado Creek, a tributary of the San Diego River, runs through the middle of this industrial area. Industrial parcels are generally larger than those in the Fairmont Avenue industrial area and more modern.

On the northside of Mission Gorge Place are outdoor storage facilities and heavy manufacturing facilities, some of which face onto the Mission Gorge commercial corridor. Due to the lack of space industrial users have constructed a variety of substandard facilities to accommodate their space needs, these include; tractor trailers, steel storage containers, and abandoned houses being converted to storage, office, and manufacturing facilities, in addition to tent and plastic tarp facilities being constructed outside. As in the Fairmont Avenue industrial area, there are flooding problems from Alvarado Creek as well as untreated industrial runoff draining directly into the Creek which feeds the San Diego River.

Parking is at a premium with some users requiring permit parking. Parking is further impacted by outdoor manufacturing. Outdoor manufacturing causes employees and patrons to park on the street creating a congested street scene, which reduces traffic visibility and requires unsafe traffic maneuvers such as having to drive a vehicle out into traffic to look around parked vehicles on the street. This problem is particularly evident near the eastern portion of the Mission Gorge Place, where a Post Office takes access to Mission Gorge Place. The Post Office is also the most significant commercial use in this portion of the Project Area which draws a significant level of traffic volume onto Mission Gorge Place.

An extension of the light-rail San Diego Trolley is nearing completion with the Grantville station located on Alvarado Canyon Road. This portion of the trolley line is a raised overhead section that runs eastward along the San Diego River from Qualcomm Stadium, continuing east over Mission Gorge Road at the Interstate 8 interchange to the Grantville station before crossing southward over Interstate 8 and going to San Diego State University. Traditionally, light-rail stations are located near high-density residential, office, or retail uses. The Grantville station is located near medium-density industrial uses and is not expected to induce significant ridership from existing uses. If some industrial uses in this area could be relocated north of Old Cliffs Road along Mission Gorge Road, near the sand and gravel mining area, this may provide an opportunity to develop the area with higher-density uses to maximize utilization of the Grantville station. Also, several parcels used as staging areas for trolley construction will need significant work to either rehabilitate the buildings or prepare the lot for development. A Super 8 Motel is also located in this area. The motel has recently completed a number of security upgrades, including new perimeter fencing and lighting, to address the crime that is present in the area. Although the operators of the motel have expressed to City staff their desire to capitalize on the presence of the Trolley to attract clientele, the deteriorated condition of nearby parcels impacts their ability to achieve this goal.

The pictures that follow show some of the conditions in the Mission Gorge Place area.



Parcel Number – 461 330 33

Outdoor manufacturing and storage near a fire lane. Occupant's floor space is not large enough to accommodate manufacturing activities. Due to low vacancy rates it will be difficult for occupant to relocate to larger facility.



Parcel Number – 461 620 05

Many industrial occupants store material outside while conducting manufacturing activities inside the building. This situation makes production more complicated and leaves an unsightly appearance.



Parcel Number – 461 320 11

Outdoor vehicle repair with storage of salvaged vehicles and machinery on a dirt lot next to Alvarado Creek where site runoff drains to.



Parcel Number – 461 210 05

Most of Mission Gorge Place is subject to flooding conditions. This property shows where Alvarado Creek has overflowed its bank and left soil deposits on the property.



Parcel Number – 461 330 21

Inadequate on-site parking for neighboring properties requires permit parking to be instituted.



Parcel Number – 461 620 07

Lack of on-site parking leads to overcrowded on-street parking, this causes unsafe traffic conditions due to lack of visibility for vehicles accessing Mission Gorge Place from the Post Office.



Parcel Number – 461 330 32

This property and several others along in the Mission Gorge Place industrial area use substandard metal building materials in a confined manufacturing area.



Parcel Number – 461 330 23

This site uses substandard and unsightly canopies for outdoor manufacturing and storage.